

TOWN OF SAUGUS LAND USE AND POLICY PLAN

Prepared by
Town Meeting Master Plan Committee
May 1990



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Local History

LAND USE POLICY PLAN

TOWN OF SAUGUS

PREPARED FOR THE TOWN OF SAUGUS

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PREFACE

This document presents a series of policies and recommendations regarding future land use, infrastructure, traffic, and fiscal matters in the Town of Saugus.

It is intended that these policies be used to guide future decisions dealing with zoning, planning, review of development projects, and the implementation of capital projects.

The report is organized as follows. An introduction outlines the scope of the plan; then, the goals of the Town for its future are presented. A section dealing with the development context outlines land use and availability, and the potential for population and economic development. Town-wide land use policies are then presented. Finally, policies and recommendations for individual study areas within the Town are presented. These areas are the Route 1 Corridor, Cliftdale, East Saugus, Saugus Center, and the Route 99 Area.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

This document sets forth a policy plan to guide the use of land in the Town of Saugus. The plan includes policies and recommendations regarding:

The location of land uses, or activities (housing, commercial development, industrial development, conservation, and other land uses;

Transportation links (principally roadways) between those activities;

Municipal services (principally water and sewerage systems) to support those activities.

These policies and recommendations are made on two levels: the general, or town-wide level, and the specific or study area level. The study areas are those which are most subject to change; that is, those in which development or redevelopment is likely and/or desirable.

Many of the recommendations deal with amendments to the Saugus Zoning By-law. It must be emphasized that the process of adoption of these zoning recommendations extends considerably beyond this plan. Acceptance of this planning document in no way constitutes adoption of the recommended zoning amendments. The proposed amendments must be drafted in the form of Town Meeting articles, and the Saugus Town Meeting will have to adopt them by a two-thirds vote.

The plan's focus is upon policies for land uses. Thus, the plan is not intended to be all-inclusive and determinative, as were the "master plans" prepared many years ago under the federal "701" planning grant program. These plans were comprehensive, in that they dealt with future school facilities, parks, police and fire

stations, libraries, and other town services. They defined the future with a high degree of certainty, and set forth the locations of private development and individual public facilities in precise detail.

This plan presumes less certainty about the future. It is based on the pragmatic view that the precise content of future development proposals cannot be foreseen, and that therefore, the Town should be prepared to evaluate future proposals and have established goals and policies upon which to base approvals and disapprovals.

Thus, the primary purpose of the plan is to establish policies for decision-making. The goals for the future must be realistic, in the light of the development context. That is, goals must be consistent with the Town's prospects for growth and development and its fiscal capacity to provide services.

The development context and the Town's goals for the future are the subject of the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2. COMMUNITY GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

The Town, through an extensive process of community participation, including public workshops and meetings, has established its goals for the future. These goals, together with land availability, regional growth prospects, and other factors which influence the development context, form the basis for the plan.

The community's goals focus on preservation of the environment, preservation of existing neighborhoods, economic development in suitable areas, improvement in the Town's fiscal base, improvement in the transportation system, and expansion of housing opportunities. They are summarized below.

Preservation of the environment

Preserve the Saugus Marsh. This marsh is a salt marsh of regional significance, and is unique in its location within close proximity of densely populated urban areas.

Develop an open space system of conservation and recreation areas, including the Saugus Marsh, the Harborfront, the shoreline of the Saugus and Pines Rivers, public parks, the **Breakheart Reservation**, open spaces to be established through cluster residential development, and others.

Preserve existing residential neighborhoods by preventing encroachment from other uses, particularly commercial uses, through use policies and buffering.

Preserve small town centers, protecting them against large scale development, and strengthening them as areas where neighborhood commercial services can be provided. Saugus Center and the nearby Iron Works can be developed as a civic center, combining historic preservation with small retail areas and offices. Cliftondale can be supported as a neighborhood center with mixed land uses.

Preserve areas of historical significance.

Economic development

Direct economic development to suitable areas, namely the Route 1 and Route 107 corridors.

Improvement in transportation systems

Improve street systems, focusing on practical adjustments in existing systems.

Ensure that the density of new development is consistent with the capacity of the road systems.

Expand transportation options to provide alternatives to private automobiles.

Expansion of housing opportunities

Provide housing that is affordable to Saugus households, through both new development and maintenance of the existing housing stock.

Improvement of the fiscal position of the Town

Encourage economic development in selected areas in order to increase the tax base.

Ensure that new development "pays its way" through thorough reviews of development impacts on public services.

Develop a capital budget planning process so that expansion and maintenance of public facilities can be funded in an orderly fashion.

CHAPTER 3. THE DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

The plan must not only address community goals, but also must be realistic in light of land availability , and population and economic growth prospects. These factors influence the pressures for new development that must be taken into account by the plan. They will be summarized below.

Land Availability

Saugus is characterized by three distinct areas. West and north Saugus, physically separated from the remainder of the community, is primarily a residential area. It contains much of the more recently developed housing in the Town, and much of the Town's remaining open land. To the east is East Saugus. Two open areas dominate East Saugus: the Saugus Marsh, a resource important for conservation and preservation; and a former landfill site which has development potential. Central Saugus contains most of the Town's housing stock, a variety of land uses, and the neighborhood centers of Cliftondale, and Saugus Center.

Relatively large amounts of open land exist in the town, including areas that are potentially developable. According to land use surveys by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and presented on the following page, of the town's total 7,327 acres, some 43 percent were developed (classified as "urban") in 1985. Of the undeveloped land (the remaining 57 percent), wetlands comprised 16 percent; and land used for recreation, mining, and waste disposal comprised 5 percent. These categories, which can be assumed to be not developable, totalled 21 percent of total land area. Land in the agriculture, forest and open categories, at least some of which can be assumed developable, totalled 2,551 acres, or 36 percent of the Town's total area.



Metropolitan Area Planning Council

60 Temple Place, Boston, Massachusetts, 02111-617-451-2770

serving 101 cities and towns in Metropolitan Boston

Land Use: 1971, 1985

December, 1988

		ACRES		
SAUGUS		1985	1971	% CHANGE
Urban	Industrial (UI)	35	16	113
	Commercial (UC)	389	319	22
	Multi-Family Residential (RO)	67	7	927
	Dense Residential (R1)	1560	1536	2
	Medium Residential (R2)	680	557	22
	Light Residential (R3)	127	113	13
	Transportation (UT)	207	207	0
	Open and Public (UO)	124	134	-8
Urban Total		3189	2889	10
Agriculture	Intensive (AC)	21	42	-51
	Extensive (AP)	23	21	9
	Woody Perennial (WP)	1	34	-98
	Agriculture Total	44	97	-54
Open Lands (O) Total		184	226	-18
Forest (F) Total		2323	2510	-7
Recreation	Water Based (RW)	0	0	0
	Participation (RP)	58	58	0
	Spectator (RS)	112	110	2
	Recreation Total	170	168	1
Wetlands	Water (W)	333	336	-1
	Fresh Wetlands (FW)	209	217	-4
	Salt Wetlands (SW)	633	655	-3
	Wetlands Total	1175	1208	-3
Mining (M) Total		61	73	-16
Waste Disposal (UW) Total		180	159	13
Community Total		7327	7329	

The 1971 data were reformatted to conform to the 1985 categories. Photo interpretation, funded by the Massachusetts Department of Public Works, was carried out in 1987-88 by the Remote Sensing Project, Department of Forestry and Wildlife Management, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Statistics were prepared by the Hazardous Waste Facilities Site Safety Council in 1988. Land use maps displaying this data at a scale of 1:25,000 are available from MAPC.

The existence of open land is significant for the plan, since it indicates the Town, unlike many suburban communities close to Boston, can expect some new growth in previously open areas. The Town should make provision for guiding new development in these areas and for ensuring that public services are provided.

Population growth potential

The existence of open land does not necessarily mean that the Town's population will grow as the land is developed. In fact, in a pattern typical of suburbs in the Boston metropolitan area, the Town's population has remained fairly stable since 1970 at an estimated 24,800, after increasing dramatically during the 1950's and 1960's, and is expected to remain stable in the future. MAPC projects a year 2010 population of 24,480.

Residential development potential

Although the Saugus population is not expected to grow rapidly, the demand for housing is likely to increase. This is due to national and regional demographic trends : specifically, the decline in household size. For a given population, this decline leads to a growth in the number of households.

The average American household is becoming increasingly small. In 1890, average household size was 4.93 persons; the number has fallen in each successive decade. The figure was 2.75 persons in 1980, and is expected to continue to decline. The average Boston metropolitan area household, 2.69 persons, is smaller than the nation's average. MAPC population forecasts place metropolitan area household size at 2.5 persons in 1990.

As part of the metropolitan region, Saugus will continue to experience these changes. The reduction in household size will result in an increase in the number of households, even if the population remains stable. This is translated into a constant demand for housing, and hence, for new residential development.

Economic development potential

Saugus was initially settled as an agricultural center. Industrialization began with the opening of the Saugus Ironworks in 1643, and continued with a variety of manufacturing enterprises developed through the 19th century. The Town's suburban character was established with the development of the Boston area transportation network during that period.

Although primarily a suburban community, the Town's strategic location-- only ten miles north of Boston--and excellent regional accessibility via Routes 1 and 107, and nearby I-95, I-93 and Route 128 , provide good potential to capture part of the Boston area's new development. This potential is illustrated by the number of establishments with regional, as opposed to local, markets already located in the Town: the Hilltop Steakhouse, the New England Shopping Center, and others.

Economic growth in the Boston area has been substantial in recent years: employment grew by 43 percent between 1967 and 1985. Economic growth in Saugus has been substantial as well, demonstrating the Town's ability to capture a share of the region's development. Employment grew by 55 percent during the 1974-1986 period.

While overall economic growth in Saugus has paralleled that in the metropolitan area, the type of growth has been very different in Saugus than in the region as a whole. Saugus has not participated in the region's service industry growth: instead, retail trade has been the primary growth sector.

The industries which currently provide the major share of employment growth and are the source of most new building in metropolitan Boston are in the service sector. While the number of manufacturing jobs has fallen, service jobs have increased dramatically. Services include a broad range of industries, from auto repair and health services to education. In 1980, service-related jobs represented 36 percent of all metropolitan Boston jobs, compared with only 20 percent in 1950. In contrast, the percent of jobs in manufacturing jobs fell from 29 percent to 20 percent in the period. Wholesale and retail trade declined in importance from 25 to 23 percent. In the future, continued growth in services, as well as in the finance, real estate and insurance categories, is expected in the region.

The case in Saugus was quite different. Services grew relatively slowly in comparison with the metropolitan area, and continue to constitute a relatively small percent of total jobs, only 11 percent in 1986. Wholesale and retail trade, on the other hand, is clearly the dominant sector in the economy, adding the most jobs of any sector

during the 1978-1986 period, and constituting fully 62 percent of total employment in the town.

The reasons for the Town's specialization in wholesale and retail trade reflects the importance of Route 1 retail businesses to the community, based on the excellent regional accessibility of the Route 1 Corridor. Further, the Corridor appears to have a retail, rather than office image. The Town may be able to capitalize to a greater extent on the regional strength of the service sector by providing good sites, with good environments, for office buildings. Good sites are those with good access and reasonable size, and where zoning standards require modern, office park standards.

CHAPTER 4. GENERAL LAND USE POLICIES

The general land use policies presented below address six Town-wide issues:

1. Protection of residential neighborhoods
2. Affordable housing for Saugus residents
3. Open space, conservation and recreation needs
4. Water, sewerage and drainage system improvements
5. Transportation improvements
6. Improvement in the Town's fiscal position

The presentation of each issue is organized as follows:

Issues

Policies

Recommendations

1. Protection of Residential Neighborhoods

Issues

In many ways, the characteristics of a town's housing stock define the nature of the community. Housing types and condition, costs, affordability, market supply and demand contribute to this

definition. While most housing is provided by the private sector, the public sector can influence the housing stock through zoning and subdivision requirements and the provision of public services.

Saugus is an established, stable residential community. As noted, the population has been stable since 1970, and future population is projected to be stable as well. Despite the stable population, the number of housing units has increased in the recent past, due to a drop in household size. Housing units increased by 981 units, or 13 percent during the 1970's, and by 780 units, or 9 percent between 1980 and 1987.

Housing prices in Saugus are somewhat below those in other close-in Boston suburbs, but have shown the same pattern of sharp increases in the mid--1980's followed by stability as has the metropolitan area. The median selling price of a home in Saugus is currently \$168,000, an increase of 60 percent over the 1984 level.

Housing prices have been stable for the last year, indicating that the market is flat. Another indication of market flatness is the increase in selling period. The average selling period was 6-8 weeks in 1986 and has increased to 3-4 months in late 1988.

There are many causes of the current flatness in the market. Negative reaction on the part of buyers to the inflated prices set in the recent past, and the desire of sellers to realize high profits are some of them. However, despite current flatness in the market, residential development is likely to continue in Saugus, because of demographic trends. The key demographic trend is the progression of the "baby boom" generation into the household formation and family establishment years. This progression has been a major cause of the recent strained housing market, and will continue to be so. The latter part of the baby boom, those born in the late 1950's, are placing demands on the market for family housing.

In light of anticipated continued residential development, several issues arise. First, new development will require additional land. Consequently, some open land in the Town will be lost. Much of this land now serves as buffer space between residential neighborhoods. A variety of undeveloped parcels throughout are residentially zoned and could accommodate additional development. These include small parcels as well as large ones, including a 34-acre site southwest of Birch Pond and a 17-acre site east of David

Drive. The loss of open land could be minimized by efficient land use patterns, namely, clustered development.

The second issue which arises in light of anticipated residential development is that some of it is likely to be in the form of multifamily buildings. Larger projects of this type can have impacts on existing residential neighborhoods, and require careful review and evaluation.

Finally, the Town can expect--and indeed, seeks--some additional new commercial and industrial development. Existing residential neighborhoods must be protected from the impacts of these types of development as well.

The Town has already taken significant steps to deal with these issues, by allowing cluster residential development as a way of preserving open space, by establishing a site plan review requirement as a Special Permit in the zoning by-law, and by requiring buffer strips between residential and non--residential districts. In the interests of further protecting residential neighborhoods, these measures could be improved and extended.

The existing Cluster Residential Development provision of the zoning by-law allows for development by special permit "in a cluster pattern subject to the dimensional regulation less than the minimum required . . . in the same district", under certain conditions, including the preservation of at least 10 percent of the tract as permanent open space. The intent of the cluster residential development provision could be furthered by increasing the open space preservation requirement, and by specifying that the open space be incorporated into the Town's open space system. Certain other provisions should be strengthened as well.

Two modifications should be considered in the site plan review process. First, the process could be streamlined so that closest attention could be given to the most important projects. Second, the provision could be extended to include architectural design review.

Site plan review, as currently written in the by-law, is required for virtually all development projects in the Town without regard for their scale or complexity. This is because the provision has relatively low applicability "thresholds". That is, site plan review is required for all structures, except individual single- and two-

family dwellings, in residential, B-1, B-3, and floodplain districts containing 3,000 square feet or more, and all structures in B-2 and industrial districts containing 6,000 square feet or more. Virtually any structure likely to have an impact on the neighborhood will be required to adhere to the procedure.

The result is that considerable amounts of Town board and staff time may prove to be required for review of relatively minor projects. If such a situation develops, the Town may find that board and staff time could be used more efficiently by relating the intensity of the review to the complexity and scope of the project. Further, developers of small or simple projects could save time and money if required to submit only the level of information needed for review of such projects. Site plan review processes, adopted in 1987, should be monitored to determine the most effective and efficient review processes.

Site plan review criteria include a number of considerations including environmental and traffic impact. To further protect existing neighborhoods from the impacts of new projects, these criteria could be extended to include design considerations.

There is a requirement in the zoning by-law for buffer strips to protect residential areas. However, this requirement relates only to non-residential projects, not to multifamily ones. Extension of the requirement to multifamily projects would allow additional protection of residential neighborhoods.

Policies

Improve the ability of the Town to control the impacts of new projects by monitoring the site plan review process and, if necessary, making improvements over time as experience dictates, and by incorporating architectural design review in the site plan review process.

Protect existing residential neighborhoods from impacts of nearby projects of all types by requiring buffer areas between these neighborhoods and adjacent multifamily developments.

Encourage the preservation of open land while at the same time accommodating new development through open space requirements in the Cluster Residential Development provision of the zoning by-law.

Recommendations

1. Consider amending the zoning by-law to allow waivers of certain site plan review requirements for minor projects and to incorporate architectural design review into Section 12.6, Site Plan Review. This recommendation furthers the community goal of neighborhood preservation, but supports other goals for quality economic development, as well.

Specifically, consider adding to Section 12.6.5, the following: "Upon written request by the applicant, the Planning Board may, in its discretion, waive the submission by the applicant of any of the required information. " Alternatively, Section 12.6 could define "major" and "minor" projects by square footage, and specify submission requirements for each type of project. (For example, "minor" projects could be those containing 3,000-9,999 square feet. Major projects could be those containing 10,000 square feet or more.)

Further, add the following items to Section 12.6.5: "front, side and rear elevations; and color, materials, and exterior features of proposed structures". Also, add to Section 12.6.6, the following: "Compatibility with the existing natural features of the site, and compatibility with the characteristics of the surrounding area in terms of scale, massing, materials, and detailing."

2. Amend the zoning by-law to require screening and buffering between R-4 and other residential districts. Specifically, amend Section 6.6, to incorporate such a requirement.

3. Amend Section 12.4.D, Cluster Residential Development, to specify minimum lot sizes, to increase the open space requirement, and to require that preserved open space be consistent with the Town's open space system. Specifically, establish minimum lot sizes for cluster developments as follows: 5,000 square feet in R-1; 10,000 square feet in R-2; 5,000 square feet in R-3 (for two attached units). establish the minimum open space requirement at 25 percent, excluding wetlands; and require that the Board of Appeals find the open space to be preserved would be a valuable addition to the Town's open space resources.

2. Affordable Housing for Saugus Residents

Issues

The lack of affordable housing is a severe national, regional and local problem. The problem more specifically defined is the shortage of housing for households at the median income or below. Particularly susceptible to the problem are the first home buyers, renters, and the elderly.

The Boston metropolitan area median income is approximately \$41,000. Census data indicate that incomes in Saugus reflect metropolitan area incomes. As noted, the median sales price of a home in Saugus is \$168,000. As an indication of the mismatch between ability to pay and price, local lenders estimate that an annual income of approximately \$70,000 (assuming a variable rate mortgage and a 5 percent down payment) would be required to afford a home priced at the \$168,000 median--an income clearly above that of many Saugus households. A household with an income at the median could afford a house in the \$100,000 range.

Studies by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Communities and Development established that there is indeed a need for affordable housing in Saugus. These studies, done in 1980 and 1985, were designed to quantify the relative need for affordable housing among various communities. The results showed the need for affordable units in Saugus and all surrounding communities, and estimated the Town's need as 850 family units and 244 elderly units.

Although housing affordability is a national problem, and is thus subject to events and trends beyond the Town's control, there are some ways in which local policies can ameliorate the situation. Devices such as large minimum lot or building square footage requirements, and complex permit reviews can drive up housing prices. Bonus approaches, in which developers are encouraged to build affordable units, can be effective in creating housing opportunities not otherwise available.

Policies

Promote increases in the supply of affordable housing by encouraging developers of new housing to provide units that are affordable to households with incomes at or below the area median.

Preserve and increase affordable housing opportunities in existing housing stock by continuing to allow conversions of single family dwellings to two family dwellings by special permit, as provided for in Section 12.4.F of the zoning by-law.

Recommendations

1. Amend the zoning by-law to allow a density bonus for projects which contain a given percentage of affordable housing. Affordable housing is defined as units that are priced so that housing expenditures (including principal, interest and taxes for ownership units, and rent excluding heat and utilities for rental units) do not exceed 30 percent of the incomes of buyers and renters who earn 80 percent or less of the metropolitan area median income, as defined and updated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Developers of multifamily projects could apply for the bonus under the special permit procedure. The density bonus would be limited to 20 percent.

Units to be offered for sale or rent under this procedure shall have deed restrictions or some other legally enforceable instrumentality acceptable to the Board of Appeals ensuring long term affordability.

2. Maintain current zoning provisions which provide for conversions of single- to two-family dwellings by right in R-3 districts, and by special permit in R-1 and R-2 districts under conditions specified in Section 12.4.F.

3. Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Needs

Although Saugus has developed into a mature suburb, a fair amount of open space remains. As noted, some 57 percent of the Town's total land area is undeveloped. Some of this open land is publicly owned (including recreation land and the Breakheart Reservation); some, privately owned. Of this privately owned land, some is developable. A part of the open land consists of wetlands, particularly, the environmentally significant Saugus Marsh.

A number of forested areas exist throughout the community, comprising some 1760 acres (excluding the Breakheart

Reservation). While some of these parcels are large, most are privately owned and zoned for residential development. Hilly terrain, ledge outcroppings and steep slopes characterize much of this land, and contribute positively to the environmental quality of the Town. These topographic and other constraints have kept this land undeveloped, and may continue to do so for some time.

Wetlands are protected through the state Wetland Protection Act, and through local floodplain zoning. Floodplain zoning is designed to protect persons and property from damage and danger of flooding. Permitted uses are restricted mainly to agriculture and conservation-recreation in floodplain zones, and special permits are required for most uses.

While the Town has been fortunate in maintaining a number of its natural resources, an "activist" approach is needed to retain the Town's environmental quality. Issues related to open space, conservation and recreation include the need for permanent protection of certain natural resource areas, the need for protection of natural features and retention of some open land as development occurs, and the need for additional land for recreation.

Issues

The Saugus Marsh, as will be described in the following chapter, is a saltmarsh of environmental significance to the entire region. The shoreline of the Saugus and Pines Rivers is a valuable natural resource for the Town. Past development has encroached significantly upon these areas; effective protection is needed.

While the marsh is the Town's most significant wetland, there are other wetland areas as well. Local floodplain zoning and the state Wetlands Protection Act provide some protection for all these areas, but do not guarantee their preservation. The Town's recently adopted (1977) Wetlands Protection Bylaw, Article XXIV of the Town's by-laws, is a potentially effective tool for wetlands protection.

The use of local zoning to protect wetlands and natural resource or conservation areas has limited potential. Under Chapter 40A, the state's zoning enabling legislation, the purposes of zoning are confined to the protection of health, safety and welfare. The application of local zoning to conservation areas is further limited by the legal principle that zoning must not deprive property owners of reasonable use of their property. Non-zoning wetlands protection by-laws, such as the Town's Wetlands Protection Bylaw, were developed to provide an alternative method of wetlands protection. The purpose of this type of by-law is specifically to protect natural resource areas, in contrast with the purposes of flood plain zoning, which are to protect persons and property. In non-zoning wetlands protection by-laws, wetland areas can be defined consistently with the Wetlands Protection Act.

In non-wetland, developable sections of the Town, additional development is inevitable, and in many cases, desirable. Efficient land development, that is, developing in concentrated, or cluster, fashion, allows for the preservation of some open space, and hence, helps preserve the Town's character. The Town has recognized the advantages of this type of clustered development in the zoning by-law, and should continue to encourage it.

Land should not only be developed efficiently, but also in a way which minimizes alteration of natural features. Excessive alteration of natural contours, such as the levelling of hilly areas, has detrimental effects upon neighborhood environment and

character. The Town has recognized the need to control the removal of sand, gravel, quarry and other earth material in the zoning by-law (Section 12.5.B). These controls should be strengthened to better control and enforce the manner in which alteration of natural features takes place.

While some public recreation areas exist in the Town--approximately 730 acres--and will be expanded by development of the I-95 Embankment as a passive recreation area (as described in Chapter 5, Section 3), evidence indicates that additional public recreation land is needed. National standards for recreation area suggest that one acre of recreation land is needed per 100 population. The Town, with 730 acres of recreation land and a population of some 24,800, achieves but a fraction of that standard.

Not only is additional open space and recreation land needed, but the various open spaces and natural features should be linked into an integrated system. Development of the I-95 Embankment and preservation of the shoreline (as recommended below, Chapter 5, Section 3) will be important steps in this regard. Additional links can be established over time through cluster development and open space preservation .

Policies

Preserve the Saugus Marsh and the shoreline of the Saugus and Pines Rivers, and improve the environmental quality of these areas.

Encourage the preservation of privately owned open land through implementation of clustered development patterns.

Strengthen the Town's ability to protect wetland and conservation areas by utilizing existing local controls.

Strengthen the Town's ability to preserve natural landscape features through more effective controls over the removal of earth materials.

Develop an open space system of conservation and recreation areas, including the Saugus Marsh, the Harborfront, the shoreline, public parks, the Breakheart Reservation, and others.

Recommendations

- 1. Continue efforts to develop the I-95 Embankment as a passive recreation area by entering into and implementing a Care and Control Agreement with the MDC.**
- 2. Initiate efforts to acquire all privately-owned portions of the Saugus Marsh.**
- 3. Initiate efforts to place the privately-owned portions of the marsh under conservation restriction.**
- 4. Rezone the industrially zoned portions of the marsh to Flood Plain.**

The above recommendations are explained in detail in the following chapter in the section, East Saugus.

- 5. Utilize the local non-zoning wetlands protection by-law, to ensure protection of wetlands and other natural resource areas.**
- 6. Amend the zoning by-law to encourage permanent preservation of open space by improving the Cluster Residential Development provision, as recommended in the section above, Neighborhood Preservation.**
- 7. Amend the zoning by-law to strengthen controls of earth removal (Section 12.5.B), in order to minimize alteration of natural land contours, and to improve enforcement provisions.**

4. The Water, Sewerage and Drainage Systems

The condition of the Town's water, sewerage and drainage systems is an important consideration in establishing policies for future development and conservation areas. These systems influence the amount and type of development that can be supported. In particular, new development must be consistent with the capacities of these systems. Of particular importance are the capacities of the systems

in the areas of Town where new growth is most likely to occur. Further, the financial needs of these systems influence the tax base expansion requirements of the Town.

Issues

Issues regarding the water, sewerage and drainage systems can be briefly summarized as follows: The water and sewerage systems need improvements. Improvements are needed both to serve existing development, and to accommodate new growth. In particular, the water distribution system needs to be rebuilt, and various improvements are needed to complete the development of the sewerage system. While plans have been prepared for the improvement of both systems, these plans need to be evaluated and implemented.

No data base nor overall drainage plan exists. Such data and plans are needed to guide the installation of additions to the system.

Finally, there is no effective system in place for the planning, scheduling and budgeting of infrastructure improvement plans. The Town should develop such a system.

The Sewerage System

Issues

The Town's sewerage system consists of collection and transmission systems, which are managed by the local Department of Public Works, and wastewater treatment, which is handled by the regional Lynn Regional Water Pollution Control District. The local collection system, consisting of sewers and seven intermediate pumping stations, carries sewage to the recently constructed main pumping station, known as the Stanley Day Station, from which it is transmitted to the regional system.

The design capacity of the Stanley Day Station is 15.8 million gallons per day (mgd). According to the Department of Public Works, the station currently averages 3.8 to 4.0, with dry day peaks of 6 mgd. Wet weather peaks approach 13 mgd, due to infiltration. Although excess capacity exists in the main station, an agreement between the Town and the regional district establishes a limit of 5.3 mgd in dry weather. Usage figures indicate that Town flows

are nearing the limit. Thus, the impact of new users, particularly those with heavy water volumes such as restaurants, must be carefully evaluated and monitored.

Most of the Town--some 90 percent, according to the Department of Public Works--is served by the public sewerage system. Recent additions to the system have been areas such as Golden Hills, parts of Route 1, Clifftondale, and Saugus Center. Isolated areas remain unsewered, such as parts of Golden Hills, Baker Hill, Route 1 and East Saugus.

The Town has made substantial additions to the sewerage system. In addition to extending service throughout the community, two major projects were recently completed: construction of the above-mentioned Stanley Day Station through a \$4 million Environmental Protection Agency grant, and construction of the 30-inch Saugus River Interceptor, which connects the Stanley Day Station with the regional collection system.

Although substantial improvements have been made, additional improvements to the existing system are required. The Town's most recent sewerage system master plan, the Facility Plan for Water Pollution Control by Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendoff in 1978, outlined those improvements as recommended actions. Some of these recommended actions, namely, the improvements noted above, have already been taken.

The recommendations of the plan which have not been implemented include implementation of an evaluation and rehabilitation program for the cost-effect elimination of infiltration/inflow; completion of certain sewer construction; and improvements to the intermediate pumping stations. Portions of the recommendations for sewer construction may have been implemented already, although no up-to-date system maps exist to indicate exactly what has been done. The recommendation for sewerage of the Route 107 area will be required if that area is to be developed.

Recommended improvements to the intermediate pumping stations were to "install standby power generating systems and alarm systems at the Floyd, Walnut, Laurel and Bristow Street Pumping Stations and make other repairs as necessary to the individual stations." (Facility Plan, page FP6-1). The Department of Public Works cites improvements at the Bristow, Lynnhurst and Laurel

stations, and the Route 1 substation, as particularly essential. In general, with the exception of the Route 1 substation, these improvements are needed to serve existing, rather than future development.

As noted, no overall process exists for the scheduling of sewerage improvements and other capital projects. The need for a capital improvements program is detailed below in the section, Improvements in the Town's Fiscal Position.

Although the Facility Plan provided a basis for phased improvements, some of the assumptions upon which the plan was based may no longer be valid and should be evaluated. Interviews with spokesmen at Camp, Dresser & McKee, the engineering firm responsible for the recent improvements at the Stanley Day Stations, confirmed this observation, particularly in planning for specific growth areas. While the plan's assumption of a sewered population of 32,000, somewhat above the forecasted population levels for the town, appears conservative, its assumptions about non-residential development may not be. The plan assumed development of some 800 acres of commercial and industrial land for shopping centers and industrial parks in the Route 1 and East Saugus areas between 1978 and the year 2020. Water use rates were assumed 1,000 and 2,000 gallons per acre per day for commercial and industrial development respectively. Total average daily flow was estimated at 5.24 mgd in 2020. As noted above, average daily flow is currently about 4.0 mgd. Actual water use rates, particularly in the Route 1 area where large restaurants have recently been located, should be determined and evaluated in conjunction with the capacity of the 10-inch main which serves the Route 1 area.

Policies

Use the 1978 Facility Plan for Water Pollution Control. Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff, the Town's sewerage 'master plan' as a guide for making improvements to the sewerage system.

Establish a capital improvements program for the planning and budgeting of capital projects.

Recommendations

1. Document the status of implementation of the 1978 Facility Plan for Water Pollution Control, by mapping the current sewerage system, specifying projects recommended by the plan which have been constructed, and identifying projects which remain to be done.
2. Evaluate assumptions in the 1978 Facility Plan for Water Pollution Control, and modify recommendations as necessary.
3. Establish priorities for implementation of recommendations of the 1978 Facility Plan for Water Pollution Control.
4. Develop cost estimates for priority recommendations.
5. Develop funding mechanisms for implementation of recommended projects.
6. Implement a capital improvement program and incorporate sewerage projects into the process.

The Water System

Issues

Water is provided to the Town by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) through seven metered connections. The Town currently consumes an average of 4 mgd, with peak day usage of 7.2 mgd. Adequacy of supply is not an immediate local concern (although it is a regional one), since no quantity limit is contained in the Town's agreement with the MWRA. Forecasts prepared in conjunction with the Town's water plan (see below) indicate future consumption will approach 4.5 mgd in the year 2010.

The water distribution system, which is operated by the Town, consists of approximately 792,000 feet of pipe. Most lines are between 70 and 100 years old, and are generally in poor condition. Chief among the problems are undersized pipes, discontinuity of pipe diameter, corroded mains, and dead end lines.

The poor condition of the pipes restricts distribution and causes low pressure flows. User convenience and, significantly, fire fighting capability, is compromised. During the summer peak period, water pressure in the Golden Hills area is reportedly reduced to a trickle at times. Water line breaks occur several times a year in the Clifftondale area. According to the Saugus Fire Department, the system in many parts of Town is currently unable to meet minimum requirements for fire flow.

Given this situation, reconstruction of the water distribution system is required. A plan for such reconstruction exists, the Water System Analysis, 1986, by Bayside Engineering Associates. The approach of the 20-year plan is to attack major problems first, namely, calcimine and cement pipes, pipes with diameters of six inches or less, and discontinuity in pipe size, to meet fire fighting needs and to satisfy maximum consumer needs.

The plan proposes a series of projects in three phases. Phase 1, proposed for 1987-1991, is estimated to cost \$6.95 million; Phase 2, 1987-1996, is estimated to cost \$5.5 million; and Phase 3, 1997-2010, is estimated to cost \$4.5 million. According to the plan, certain Phase 2 projects would be better implemented during Phase 1, but could be deferred until the 1992-1996 period. The plan recommends the Town consider several financing mechanisms, including bonding, use of DEQE rehabilitation funds, and developer charges.

The Town has begun to implement the plan's recommendations. New lines, recommended as Phase 1 improvements, have been installed in the following areas, according to the Department of Public Works: Winter Street-Lincoln Avenue; Mount Pleasant Street-Winter Street; Main-Summer Streets; and Old Road-Walnut Street.

Improvements in the existing system are required to serve development now in place. However, certain improvements will be required to serve the growth areas of East Saugus and the Route 1 Corridor. At present, no water service is available on Route 107 south of Ballard Street, although an MWRA transmission line runs down Route 107. According to spokespersons at Bayside Engineering, it may be possible for service to be provided to the area by the Town's obtaining permission from the MWRA to tap that line.

An improvement in the Route 1 Corridor, installation of a 12-inch transmission main some 3,700 feet from Thomas Street south along Route 1, was recommended for the 1992-1996 period by the Water System Analysis. According to Bayside Engineering spokespersons, however, this improvement may be required sooner, due to the unanticipated growth, particularly of restaurants, in that area.

Policies

Use the 1986 Water Systems Analysis, Bayside Engineering Associates, Inc., the Town's water distribution system 'master plan' as a guide for making improvements to the water distribution system.

Establish a capital improvements program for the planning and budgeting of capital projects.

Ensure new projects contribute to improvements in the water distribution system.

Recommendations

1. Use the Water System Analysis, 1986, as the basis for making improvements in the Town's water distribution system.
2. Develop cost estimates for priority recommendations.
3. Develop funding mechanisms for implementation of recommended projects.
4. Implement a capital improvement program and incorporate water distribution system improvement projects into the process.
5. Use the Site Plan Review procedure to evaluate the impacts and requirements of new projects on the water distribution system, and require developers to provide a fair share of system improvements as a condition of project approval.

The Drainage System

Issues

The proper working of a municipal drainage system requires sizing and installation of storm drains based on the requirements of the linked system. Drainage facilities for new development must thus be adequate to serve on-site needs as well as those of the larger system in the present and future.

No comprehensive drainage data base or plan exists in Saugus. Thus, there is no basis upon which the Town can make improvements in the existing system nor establish the drainage facilities requirements for new development.

The Town must catalogue its existing system, develop a master drainage plan, and require new development or redevelopment to install drainage facilities with capacities adequate to meet the requirements of ultimate development.

Policies

Obtain and utilize a comprehensive drainage plan as a guide in land use decision making and in establishing facilities requirements.

Recommendations

- 1. Develop a comprehensive drainage plan.**
- 2. Utilize the comprehensive drainage plan in making improvements in the existing drainage system, in reviewing new projects, and in establishing drainage facilities requirements in the subdivision and site plan review processes.**
- 3 Implement a capital improvement program and incorporate drainage system improvement projects into the process.**

Transportation Improvements

Transportation, particularly traffic congestion, is the Town's most obvious problem, if not its most serious issue. Curiously, traffic has received the least amount of attention from the standpoint of planning and problem solving. In contrast to the planning which has been done for the water and sewerage systems, no traffic or transportation plans exist. Even the most basic data is lacking. Ironically, traffic is the problem which may be the most difficult to solve.

Issues

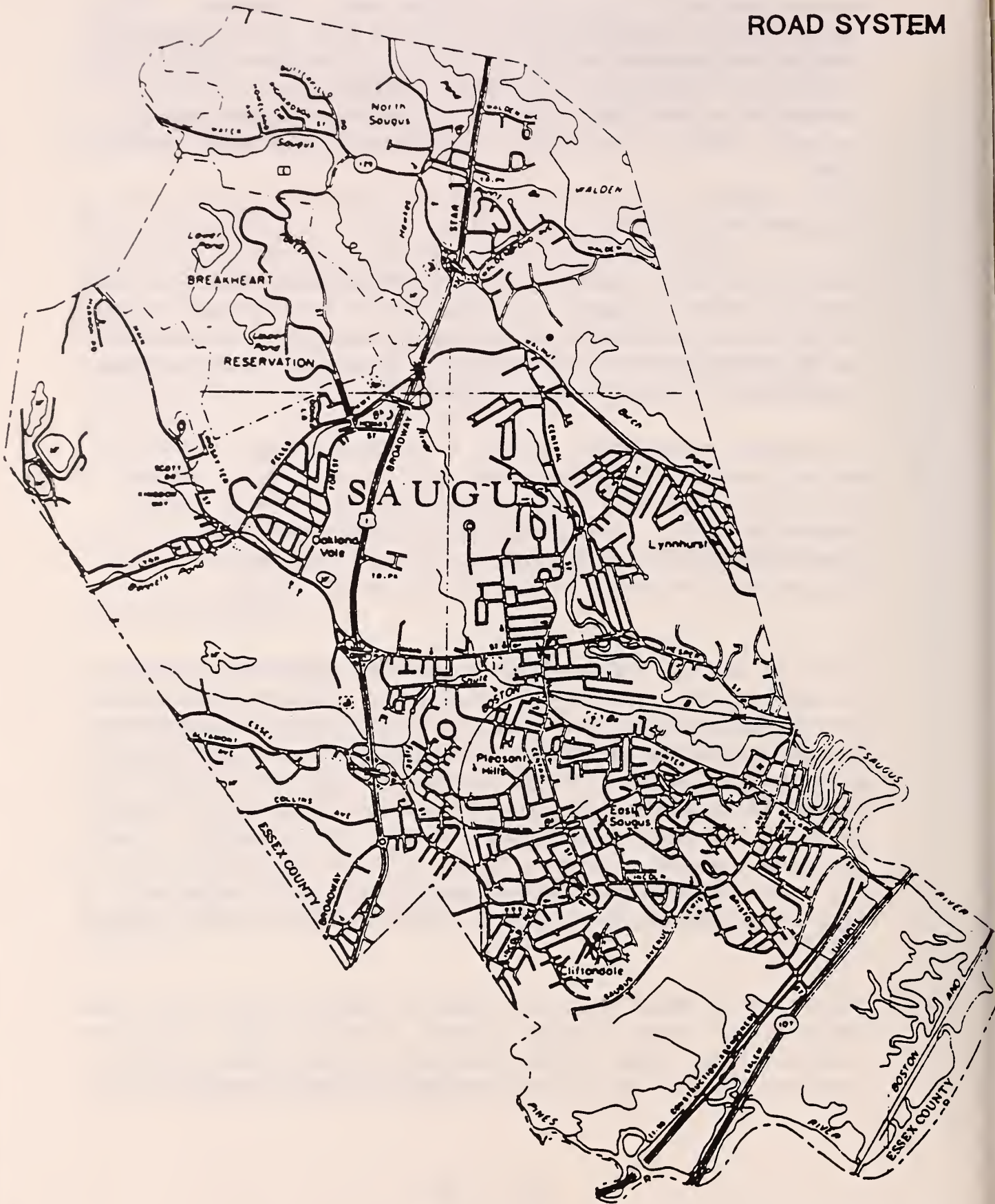
The Town's traffic problems can be summarized succinctly as follows: traffic is already too heavy for the existing road network. In the future, the problem is likely to become worse, because traffic can be expected to increase. Existing development patterns make expansion of the road network difficult.

The Saugus transportation system is primarily based on roadways serving private automobiles, trucks and other delivery vehicles. Bus service consists of three scheduled MBTA routes to Boston, Malden and Lynn. A north-south rail line, owned by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, runs through East Saugus, and provides commuter rail and freight service.

The road network is dominated by two north-south highways: Route 1 and Route 107. (See map, Road System.) Route 1, which passes through the middle of the Town, is a major six-lane divided state highway connecting Boston with New Hampshire and Maine, and carrying approximately 100,000 vehicles per day. To the east is Route 107, a less significant roadway which contains four lanes, divided, and carries approximately 25,000 vehicles per day. Also known as the Salem Turnpike, Route 107 links Saugus with Revere to the south and the Salem/Beverly areas to the north. Most traffic on both these roads is through traffic, generated from points outside the Town.

There are no major east-west routes to facilitate the flow of local traffic through town. Instead, a series of local streets handles the east-west flow. These streets were laid out many years ago and were not designed for the volumes they now accommodate.

ROAD SYSTEM



Counts of traffic volumes provide basic information about the functioning of road networks. Traffic counts can be used to determine how traffic volumes have changed over time and to compare traffic volumes to the design capacity of roadways. Traffic count data for various points in Saugus, taken in 1963, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1987 and 1988, were available for these purposes.

The data, summarized below, point to two important conclusions. First, traffic has been steadily increasing over time. In most areas of the Town, volumes have increased by 2-3 percent per year. This increase can be attributed to local and regional growth and to the increase in automobile ownership and usage. Since there is no reason to expect these trends to reverse, continued increases in traffic volumes can be anticipated.

Annual average increases in volumes for various roadways are presented below.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Annual average increase</u>
Route 1 (northern portion)	2.9 percent
Route 1 (southern portion)	3.4
Route 107	2.2
Walnut St. (east of Route 1)	2.2
Walnut St. (west of Route 1)	3.1-6.6
Main St.	1.8
Essex St. (west of Route 1)	1.8
Essex St. (east of Route 1)	1.9-2.9
Lincoln Ave.	1.8-5.3
Ballard-Winter St.	2.2
Central St.	2.2-3.1

The second conclusion that can be drawn from the traffic count data is that, in general, traffic volumes exceed the design capacity of the roadways.

Volume and capacity can be compared by a volume/capacity ratio. Road capacity is the ability of a road, based on pavement width, to handle a given traffic flow without congestion and at a reasonable operating speed, as determined by the Institute of Traffic Engineers. A volume/capacity ratio of less than 1.0 indicates that volumes are below capacity, a situation of excess capacity; a ratio of 1.0 indicates that volume and capacity are the same; and a ratio greater

than 1.0 indicates that volume exceeds capacity, a situation of congestion. The accompanying table, not surprisingly, shows that in many locations, volumes exceed road capacity, and that the situation has become worse in the last twenty-five years. Most serious conditions are found at intersections, at major activity centers such as Cliftondale, and on the western portion of Walnut Street due to traffic from new development in North Saugus and Lynnfield.

Thus, the main transportation problem in Saugus is traffic congestion. Congestion is already serious, and is likely to become worse. The result will be reduced speeds, unsafe conditions for vehicles and pedestrians, and congestion. Because the potential for a new east-west route is limited, and because a majority of the Town's streets cannot be widened due to inadequate rights-of-way and minimal building setbacks, there are few options available to increase roadway capacity. Improvements may have to focus on modest developments and adjustments, such as restriping to obtain turning lanes, intersection widening, and signal re-timing.

Policies

Develop and implement a comprehensive traffic circulation plan, which includes a complete data base, recommendations for the improvement and maintenance of existing street surfaces, and measures to improve traffic flow.

Give uppermost consideration to traffic impacts when evaluating proposals for new development, and ensure such developments provide adequate traffic mitigating measures.

Recommendations

- 1. Establish authority and responsibility for traffic planning in a Town government entity.**
- 2. Engage professional assistance to develop a comprehensive traffic improvement program, to include an adequate data base (including turning movements at key intersections) to establish current traffic patterns; projections of future traffic flows; pavement management programs; and traffic flow improvements.**

STREET CHARACTERISTICS/INVENTORY

1963-1988

Road	Roadway	# of	1963	1963	1988	1988
	Width (ft.)	lanes	Volume*	Vol/Cap.	Volume™	Vol/Cap
Route 1	100-140	4	42-50,000	.7-1.4	97-102,000	--
Route 107	66-104	4	14-16,000	.5-1.0	24- 27,500	--
Water St.129	36- 60	2-4	5,000	.8	7,800	1.4
Main St.						
east of 1	50- 54	2	6,400-10,000	.8-.9	10-15,600	1.6
west of 1	50- 60	2-4	7,000	1.0	10,900	1.2-1.4
Hamilton St.	60	2-3	6,000	.4	9,300	.6
Essex St.						
east of 1	42- 60	2	4- 6,000	.6-1.0	11,000	1.7-1.9
west of 1	50	2	11,000	1.1	17,000	1.7
Lincoln Ave.	50- 60	2	5-11,000	.4- .9	11,300-17,000	.9-1.7
Ballard St.	50- 84	2	5,000	.4	8,600	.7
Winter St.	46- 56	2	6,000	1.0	10,300	1.7
Central St.	50	2-4	4,200- 9,000	.9-1.0	8,000-17,100	1.7-1.9
Cntrl(Saville)	36- 50	2	4,000	.4	6,900	.7
Lynn Fells Pkwy	70	2-4	7,500- 9,500	.5- .8	13-16,300	.9-1.4
Walnut St.						
east of 1	50	2	10,000-13,000	.2- .8	17-22,500	1.2-1.4
west of 1	50	2	3,500- 8,000	.4-1.0	15-17,200	1.9

* Vehicles per day based on 1963 Saugus Master Plan

™ Vehicles per day based on actual counts and projects

Ranges are used to represent varying conditions along the roadway

3. Implement a capital improvement program and incorporate traffic improvement projects into the process.
4. Enforce off-street parking and loading requirements for new projects so that development does not further hamper safety and traffic flow.
5. Require sufficient rights-of-way and street design standards in future subdivisions.

6. Improvement in the Town's Fiscal Position

Issues

This fiscal position of the Town is closely related to land use policies. As producers of revenues through the property tax, and as consumers of services, land uses affect municipal revenues and expenditures. The amount and type of future development will affect the Town's future revenue and expenditure position.

The town faces serious problems with respect to its fiscal situation which can be addressed by policies for future land use contained in this plan.

Current trends point to an increasingly serious shortfall in Town revenues. Thus, the Town's fiscal position must be improved. Among other approaches, this must be done through increasing the local tax base. (Other approaches, recommended by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue in a 1986 report, Town of Saugus, Fiscal Capacity Review, include review of local receipts and user fees, and improved operating budget process particularly in relation to collective bargaining positions, and establishment of user fees to place the water and sewerage systems on a self sustaining basis.)

The revenue-expenditure situation is as follows. Since 1983, the bulk of expenditures have been devoted to departmental appropriations, and have remained relatively constant at 76-79 percent. Fixed costs, however, have increased from 10 percent to 15 percent of total expenditures, due to retirement, pensions and bond

payments. Capital costs have been stable at 1 percent of total expenditures.

On the revenue side, real and personal property taxes have provided 58-62 percent of total revenues; state aid, 21-23 percent; and local receipts, 8-10 percent.

While there was a cash surplus through the mid-1980's, the situation is changing and is a cause for concern. Expenditures are increasing and revenues are decreasing to the extent that current service levels cannot be supported.

Expenditures are up due to increased costs of salaries, pensions, insurance, MWRA assessments, and pressure for increased capital expenditures due to long-deferred capital needs. Revenues are down due to reduced revenue sharing and state aid. Expenditure and revenue projections, based upon an analysis of town needs and budget trends (see accompanying tables), show that expenditures will increase at between 5 and 6 percent per year, while revenues will increase by only 4 percent. The increase in expenditures reflects a 10-13 percent annual increase in fixed costs, and a 10 percent annual increase in capital costs. The projected increase in revenues assumes property tax revenues will increase by the historical rate 7 percent per year, and that state aid will be reduced. If this situation occurs, a budget shortfall will result, which will require that services be cut.

A related problem is the absence of planning and budgeting for capital projects. Capital expenditures have been maintained at a low percent of total expenditures in order to avoid budget shortfalls. The result, however, is serious service and deferred maintenance problems which must be addressed in the near future, placing further strains on the fiscal situation. A program of capital planning and budget, coupled with adequate revenues, would allow the town to proceed with capital projects in an orderly way.

Policies

The policies below are land use policies which can help improve the Town's fiscal situation. Other management, budgeting, and accounting policies can help as well.

TOWN OF SAUGUS
HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED EXPENDITURES

APPROPRIATIONS	(\$ 000)			Estimated	
	FY 83	FY 85	FY 89	FY90	FY95
Departmental	17,441	18,905	22,947	23,950	29,139
Fixed Costs	2,177	3,697	5,076	5,758	9,273
Capital Costs	242	319	775	850	1,369
Others	2,103	1,870	2,333	2,300	2,666
Total	21,963	24,791	31,131	32,858	42,447
Departmental	79%	76%	74%	73%	69%
Fixed Costs	10	15	16	17	22
Capital Costs	1	1	2	3	3
Others	10	8	8	7	6
Total	100%	100	100%	100%	100%

TOWN OF SAUGUS
HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED REVENUES

	(\$ 000)			Estimated	
REVENUES	FY83	FY85	FY88	FY90	FY95
Real and Personal Property Taxes	13,562	14,300	17,739	20,309	25,920
Other funds	8,401	10,491	9,980	9,585	9,585
Total	21,963	24,791	27,719	29,894	35,505

Estimated Appropriation Limit	30,440
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Real and Personal Property Taxes	62%	58%	64%	68%	73%
Other funds	38%	42%	36%	32%	27%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Adopt zoning and other policies to expand the tax base through development in suitable areas, namely, the Route 1 and Route 107 (east side) Corridors.

Ensure new development "pays its way".

Establish a program of planning and budgeting for capital projects. A capital improvement program is a five-year plan for capital expenditures which coordinates community planning, financial capacity and physical development.

Recommendations

- 1. Amend the zoning by-law to establish the Planned Conservation and Development District in designated portions of East Saugus, and the Highway Corridor District in the Route 1 Corridor, and related recommendations presented in this document, in order to encourage economic development and tax base expansion.**
- 2. Use the site plan review process in the zoning by-law, modified as recommended by this document, to review the impacts of new projects and to ensure they contribute a fair share of the capital improvements they require.** If the tax base is to be expanded, new development is required. However, if the impact of a new development is increased municipal costs due to service needs, there will be no net increase in the tax base. The Town can ensure that new development pays its way through the review, analysis and establishment of conditions in the Site Plan Review process.
- 3. Develop and implement a capital improvements program.** The Town should appoint a capital budget committee. Town departments should inventory the condition of existing facilities, document the need for improvements, and evaluate existing capital plans. The capital budget committee should evaluate needs for new projects and establish priorities. The Town should develop financing plans for capital projects based upon its long range fiscal capacity.

With a capital improvements program, the Town will be able to improve the coordination between capital needs and budgets.

Identifying and scheduling improvements in advance will enable the Town to avoid sudden increases in expenditure requirements. Another advantage of capital improvement planning is the opportunity to identify the most economical ways of financing projects, such as state and federal programs.

CHAPTER 5. AREA LAND USE POLICIES

This chapter contains land use policies and recommendations for five specific areas of town: The Route 1 Corridor, Cliftondale, East Saugus, Saugus Center, and the Route 99 Area. (See map, Study Areas.) These areas have been selected for special attention because of their development potential and/or their unique environment.

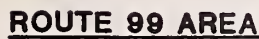
1. The Route 1 Corridor

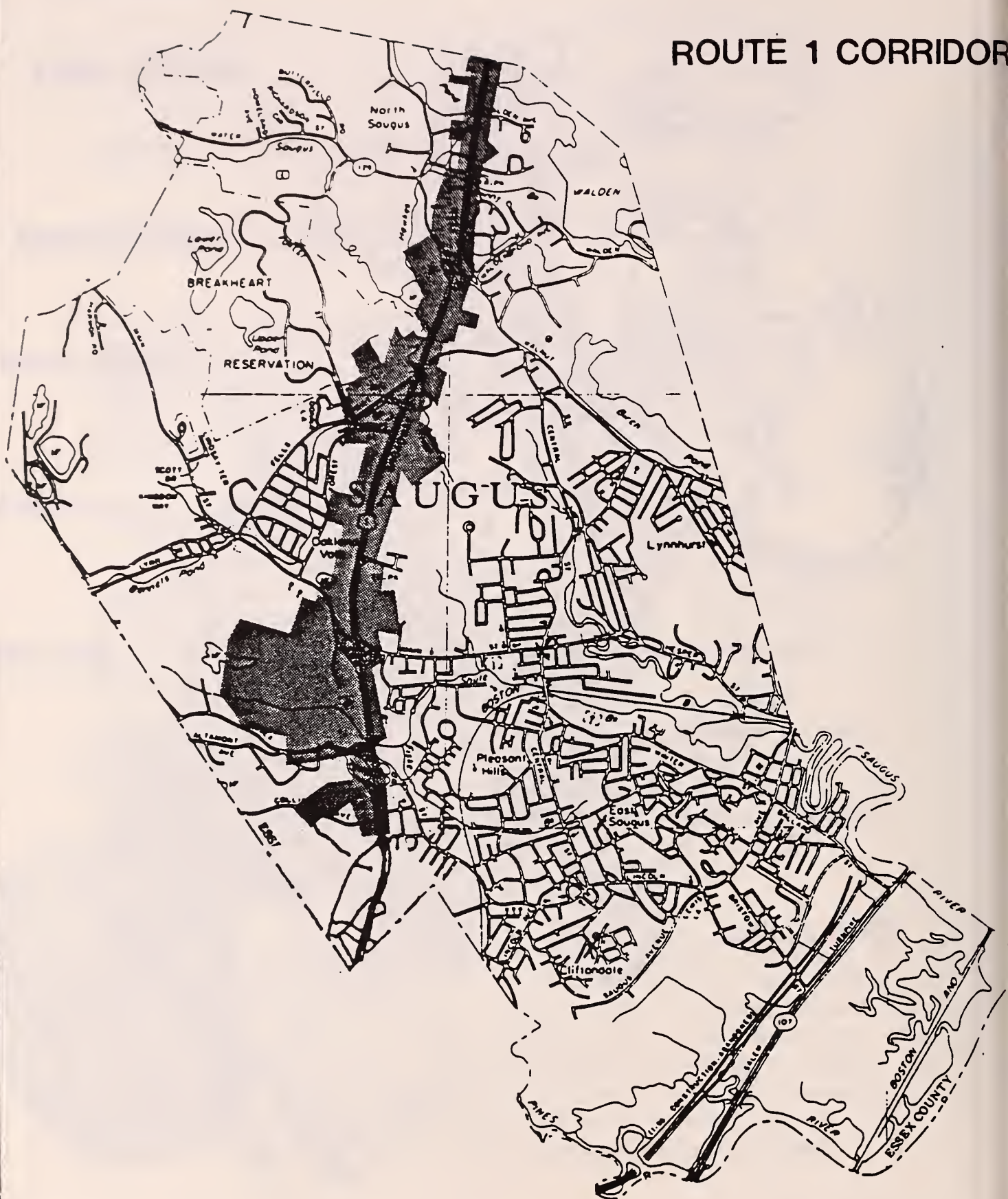
The Route 1 Corridor lies on both sides of Route 1 from the Revere to Lynnfield borders. For the purposes of this study, the Corridor extends the width of the business zones that abut Route 1 from Lynnfield to the Route 99-Frank Pl Bennett Highway intersection in the south. (See map, Route 1 Corridor.)

The Corridor contains a wide variety of land uses, including motels, gas stations, dry cleaners, fast-food and other restaurants, convenience and liquor stores, car dealers, and others. Major occupants of the Corridor are some of the Town's largest tax payers: the New England Shopping Center, the El Torito Restaurant, the Hilltop Steak House, Zayre's, K-Mart, and Sears.

Route 1 provides the Corridor with a regional market. Residents of nearby communities, as well as north-south travellers and tourists pass through in great numbers. The road itself is a 6-lane, divided highway with a speed limit of 45 miles per hour. The roadway is intersected by Essex, Main and Walnut Streets, and the Lynn Fells Parkway, and numerous driveways (curb cuts) of individual business establishments. The Commonwealth has been reconstructing sections of Route 1 north and south of Saugus as limited access

STUDY AREA





highways. The Town can expect such reconstruction to take place some time in the future.

Issues

The issues facing the Town in the Route 1 Corridor center on the need for improvement in the area's environment, safety and land use efficiency.

Visual blight characterizes the area, and is confirmed by community consensus at public workshops, visual inspection, and the common experiences of travellers on Route 1. Signage of apparent unlimited size, color and light compete for attention in a cacophony that dulls the senses. Black-topped parking lots seem to engulf a collection of ad hoc buildings, sometimes marginal and often of mediocre architectural quality. The opening of driveway from the many small parcels onto Route 1 results in countless curb cuts and unsafe traffic conditions. The many individual, small parcels, each with its own driveway(s) and parking areas, make for an inefficient use of land.

The poor quality of the corridor's environment , its safety problems and inefficient land uses, stem, at least in part, from the relatively permissive zoning in place. The zoning requirements in this district virtually define a strip commercial area of small lots and numerous driveways.

Most of the Corridor is zoned B-2, High-Rise Business and Industrial. Uses permitted in this district include retail, office, restaurant, wholesaling (by special permit), gas stations and auto showrooms (by special permit), and light manufacturing (by special permit). Building heights can reach 90 feet, or seven stories, by special permit; lot minimums, however, are but 10,000 square feet. Frontage requirements, 100 feet minimum, are no higher than in other business districts; required front setbacks are only 50 feet. There is no side or rear yard requirement. Buildings can cover 70 percent of lot area. The floor to area ratio (FAR) implied by the by-law's dimensional standards can be as high as 0.87 with surface parking, and 2.1-4.9 with structured parking. The zoning by-law permits multiple signs, and multiple-colored, illuminated signs. (Some of the signs may be dimensionally non-conforming.)

Although the Corridor appears to be highly developed now, the by-law would allow extensive additional development--three to five times as much building as exists now--to occur. (See End Note to this chapter.) Additional development would, of course, worsen the existing problems.

Despite the problems inherent in strip development, the automobile orientation of the Corridor is a reality that is here to stay. Planning should recognize this fact with constructive solutions to regulate the amount of development to reasonable levels, to "civilize" the strip, and make it function better.

Improvement in the Route 1 Corridor will require a combination of time, money, and participation of both the public and private sectors. Many of the improvements involve redevelopment of properties and roadways, both of which take many years. Further, improvements in the public water distribution system will be needed, as described above (Chapter 4, Section 4). Investment in property will be required. Actions by the Town, local business owners, and local land owners will be needed.

Policies

Improve the environmental quality of the Route 1 Corridor through reductions in the amount of permitted development, and upgraded land use controls, including use, dimensional and signage requirements.

This proposal assumes an increasing desirability and value of locations in the Corridor. Metropolitan area growth, the increasing shortage of large sites and the potential to assemble sites in the Corridor, and the coming Central Artery reconstruction all point toward such increases in desirability and value. Redevelopment of the Corridor will help increase the Town's tax base. Upgraded land use controls will be consistent with the ultimate reconstruction of Route 1.

Improve traffic safety in the Route 1 Corridor through upgraded land use controls and, eventually, the development of a system of service roads parallel to Route 1.

Recommendations

1. Establish a new zoning district, Highway Corridor, and place the entire Route 1 Corridor in that zone.

The purposes of this new district will be to encourage redevelopment of high quality, to increase the tax base, to improve the visual quality of the area, and to ameliorate traffic congestion and safety problems.

2. Establish use and dimensional requirements in the Highway Corridor District which allow for reasonable levels of building and ensure development is of high quality. The following standards are recommended.

Permitted uses: Retail, Office, Restaurant other than fast food restaurant, accessory uses including health club, light manufacturing.

Minimum lot size: 1 acre

Maximum building height: 6 stories; 3 stories within 200 feet of residential districts

Maximum FAR: 0.86

Parking: As currently required by zoning by-law.

Landscaping: Required for parking lots and buffer strips

The uses proposed for the new district are more restrictive than those currently allowed in the area. Fast food restaurants and auto dealerships, for example, would not be permitted. An increased minimum lot area would result in an eventual reduction in the number of driveways. Building heights would be limited to 3 stories in areas near residential districts, instead of 6 stories as permitted by existing zoning. The FAR of 0.86 would allow substantial amounts of new development to occur, but less than currently allowed.

3. Develop an eventual system of service roads parallel to Route 1. This long range project will involve progressive change and several approaches. Portions of the existing Route 1 right-of-way may be available for use. Easements for service roads could be defined in the short term, which would have to be respected by eventual redevelopment. Field surveys have shown that in most of the Corridor, obstacles could be easily removed.

4. Protect the interests of small business establishments through private actions to establish retail complexes. Many businesses in the corridor require only small amounts of land. Although these businesses would be protected by the "grandfather clause" if new zoning policies are adopted, expansions and alterations would require special permits and may not be feasible. The solution for these small enterprises is to be grouped together in larger structures, either as tenants or as condominium owners of retail complexes, sharing driveways, parking areas and common services.

5. Implement the recommendations contained in the previous chapter regarding improvements in the sewerage, water and drainage systems (Chapter 4, Section 4). In particular, the recommendations of the master plans, Facility Plan for Water Pollution Control, and Water Systems Analysis, should be implemented; a drainage plan should be developed; new

developments should contribute to infrastructure improvements, and a capital budgeting process should be established.

2. Cliftdale

Cliftdale Square includes the parcels abutting Lincoln Avenue, Essex Street, and Jackson Street. For the purposes of this study, its boundaries coincide with those of the B-1, Business-Neighborhood zoning district. (See map, Cliftdale.)

Permitted uses in the B-1 district are those characteristic of neighborhood business areas: stores, offices, restaurants, and, by special permit, certain other uses. Uses not allowed in the district include residential uses, manufacturing, wholesaling, and junkyards.

The Square is a neighborhood convenience shopping area which was established around the turn of the century. The majority of businesses are small and independently owned and operated. Most patrons of the Square's stores and services drive to the area and are Saugus residents, and many live in the immediate neighborhood. In addition to convenience shopping, the Square is used for parking by MBTA bus commuters.

Some of the Square's older buildings remain standing. The area's assets are its older (if not historic) character, personal services and variety of retail stores.

Issues

Four issues must be addressed in planning for Cliftdale: the lack of parking, traffic congestion, the appearance of the area, and zoning. Water and sewerage services are adequate, according to the Department of Public Works; and there no special problems in Cliftdale other than the needs for overall improvement in these systems.

Traffic congestion is an immediate and obvious problem. Yet, traffic points to the very reason for the success of the Square, and establishes its nature as a convenience center. Two of the three streets forming the Square are important local streets-- Lincoln Avenue and Essex Street--and bring many people into the area. Both streets carry substantial volumes of traffic. According to traffic

SAUGUS

Land Use Policy Plan

CLIFTONDALE



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counts made in 1988, daily traffic volumes on Lincoln Avenue were 11,400 vehicles south of the Square, and 13,500 vehicles between the Square and Central Street. Volumes on Essex Street were 11,600. These volumes are above the optimal capacity of the streets, and result in backups and congestion. MBTA busses stop in the Square, which add to the congestion.

While many cars pass through the area, the availability of parking is key to the success of the functioning of the Square as a convenience center. As noted, most patrons drive to the area, and need accessible parking spaces; employees also must be able to park. Parking, however, was cited as the Square's major problem, in an MAPC 1982 survey, and is still considered to be a serious situation.

There are some 360 parking spaces in the square, of which 97 are on-street, and 263 off-street. Local officials estimated that parking space utilization is very high, at approximately 100 percent. (A rate of 80 percent is usually considered to be saturation.) Parking duration is short; 85 percent of the vehicles surveyed in the MAPC survey cited above parked for 15 minutes or less.

The heavy convenience orientation of the Square points to the need for additional convenient on-street parking spaces, and for additional off-street spaces for employees and other long-term parkers. Yet, the parking situation in the Square is constrained by narrow streets, which limit on-street parking, and dense development, which limits off-street parking.

The physical appearance of the Square could be improved to make the area more attractive for patrons, and hence, more competitive. Storefronts and signs could be improved. Better sidewalks and crosswalks, and the addition of street furniture and landscaping would add pedestrian amenities.

Finally, several issues concerning zoning arise. The B-1 or Neighborhood Business District extends not only throughout the square proper, that is, the rotary and immediate vicinity, but in strips almost a quarter of a mile south along Lincoln Avenue, and a quarter of a mile west on Essex Street. Offices, stores, and other uses are allowed in the district, as noted above. The business zoning of these strips has led to the spreading of businesses and offices away from the center of the square and into former residential areas. Not only has this pattern changed the character of

these latter areas, but also has sapped some of the vitality from the center of the Square.

A second zoning issue relates to permitted uses. Residential uses are not allowed in the district, as noted. This restriction may be inappropriate in a neighborhood center. In many such centers, apartments are located above stores, adding to the neighborhood's vitality as well as providing housing opportunities.

Policies

Strengthen and reconcentrate Clifftondale Square as a mixed use neighborhood center through a combination of public and private actions. The goal of these activities should be to provide retail activities, multifamily housing, improved parking facilities, improved landscaping and building facades, and pedestrian amenities.

Recommendations

- 1. Implement a comprehensive traffic circulation planning program, as recommended in the previous chapter.**
- 2. Relocate MBTA bus stops to facilitate the movement of traffic through the Square.**
- 3. Explore the development of additional off-street parking facilities through use of the CARD program.**

The CARD designation of the area has been renewed, making the Town eligible to apply for funding of off-street parking facilities in the area.

- 4. Reorganize and integrate existing back lots and off street parking areas to obtain additional parking and make better use of existing facilities.**

A parking area containing 35 spaces could be constructed between Smith Road and Ernest Street, connecting to an existing lot behind the Saugus Bank and Trust Company. Pedestrian alleys leading to the proposed lot, and crosswalks on Lincoln Avenue should be provided in conjunction with development of the parking area. This project could be undertaken by the Town or by the property owners.

5. Attempt to make better use of the church parking lot, by establishing an agreement with the church for use of the area by shoppers when not needed for religious or community activities.

6. Develop and promote the use of design guidelines for improvement of front and rear building facades and signage. This activity should be undertaken by the local business association.

While the Square contains many varied commercial buildings, some coordination of signage, materials, colors, and accessories could unify the streetscape and present an image that is identifiable and attractive.

7. Amend the zoning by-law to allow multifamily residential use on upper floors of commercial buildings in B-1 districts.

Multifamily use in a neighborhood center such as Clifftondale Square can help revitalize the area, maintain activity during the evening hours, provide markets for local businesses, and provide housing opportunities.

8. Amend the zoning map to reduce the extent of the B-1 district along Essex Street and Lincoln Avenue.

Reduction in the size of the business area would serve to reconcentrate commercial activities.

9. Implement the recommendations contained in the previous chapter regarding improvements in the sewerage, water and drainage systems (Chapter 4, Section 4). In particular, the recommendations of the master plans, Facility Plan for Water Pollution Control, and Water Systems Analysis, should be implemented; a drainage plan should be developed; new developments should contribute to infrastructure improvements, and a capital budgeting process should be established.

3. East Saugus

East Saugus, or Saugus Waterfront and Marsh area is located in the eastern portion of the Town. The area is bounded on the north by the Saugus River; on the east and south, by the Pines River; and on the west by residential areas at the edge of Saugus and Eastern Avenues. (See map, East Saugus.)

The plan for the area presented below contains multiple elements, reflecting the distinct characteristics of the various portions of the area. Zoning recommendations are illustrated on the map, East Saugus: Recommended Zoning Districts. (The plan is presented in more detail in the separate document, East Saugus Waterfront / Marsh Management Plan, Lozano, White and Associates, Inc., June, 1989.)

The Saugus Marsh

The Saugus Marsh is the most predominant feature of the East Saugus area. The marsh is part of the larger Rumney Marsh system, and is a saltwater marsh of regional significance. Encroachment such as roads, a now-abandoned highway embankment, a landfill, a resource recovery plant and other projects, have reduced the size of the marsh considerably from its original size. For the purposes of this study, the remaining marsh is located on the west side of Route 107.

Issues

Land in the present Saugus Marsh is held by several owners. The Town of Saugus and the MDC together own approximately 40 acres. The DeMatteo Construction Co. owns some 177.6 acres; a 3.5 acre parcel, the Reliable Rubbish site, is owned by W. Patterson and M. DiOrio. The Commonwealth owns the abandoned Interstate 95 highway embankment, which passes through the marsh. Some 60 acres of the embankment are expected to be transferred to the Town; the remaining 85 acres are to be transferred to the MDC.

SAUGUS

Land Use Policy Plan

EAST SAUGUS: Recommended Zoning Districts



RECOMMENDED ZONING DISTRICTS



FLOOD PLAIN



WATERFRONT BUSINESS



PLANNED CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT



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Although the marsh itself is a single entity with the characteristics of a saltmarsh, the Town has zoned portions of it in two separate zoning districts. The portion to the west of the I-95 embankment is zoned Flood Plain. Only uses such as conservation, recreation, agriculture, and certain essential municipal facilities are permitted in this zone. Part of the embankment is zoned Residential (R-1); another part, and an adjacent portion of the marsh to the east of the embankment, are zoned Industrial. A wide variety of non-residential uses are permitted in this zone. The industrial classification in this area is not consistent with the objectives of the Town for marsh preservation, nor is it realistic in terms of development capability of a saltmarsh. The industrially zoned land includes parcels owned by DeMatteo Construction Company and W. Patterson-M. DiOrio.

Policies

The community has defined its objectives for the Saugus Marsh:

Promote conservation of the Saugus marsh
stabilize critical marsh areas, while promoting public access
and conservation

These objectives related to the marsh and the embankment contained within it can be further clarified as follows: No building should be permitted in the marsh. It should be preserved; restored where damaged; and its functioning as a salt marsh should be improved. The embankment should be modified to accommodate public access and recreation, consistent with preservation of the marsh.

In developing strategies to control the uses of the marsh, it is essential recognize that most of the marsh is in private ownership. Thus, achievement of these objectives will require, at the very least, appropriate zoning controls. At best, public ownership of the marsh, or of its development rights, would assure the opportunity for full control.

Measures are already underway to achieve one of the Town's objectives for the area. These measures relate to modification of the embankment to accommodate public access, recreation and marsh stabilization.

Recommendations

1. Continue efforts to enter into and implement the Care and Control Agreement with the MDC.

As noted, the Commonwealth intends to transfer 60 acres of the embankment to the Town, with the provision that the Town enter into an agreement regarding the management of the property with the MDC. Such an agreement, known as a "Care and Control Agreement" has been drafted wherein the Town is to transfer care and control of the area to the MDC. The draft agreement specifies certain conditions consistent with the objectives of both agencies for the recreation and conservation use of the area, such as that there be no vehicular parking or equipment storage on the site, and that there be no access to motor vehicles. The Town's objective to maintain the flood control function of the embankment is recognized by a provision in the agreement that sand removal will be limited to that required for the Revere Beach Erosion Control Project and marsh restoration. Further, the Town will have a continuing role in the design of facilities for natural preservation of the area.

2. Initiate efforts to acquire all privately-owned portions of the Saugus Marsh.

Ownership of the marsh by the Town could ensure its permanent preservation. Although many mechanisms are in place which are intended to preserve the environmental quality of the marsh, such as the Wetland Protection Act, the ACEC, and others, these measures do not provide iron-clad guarantees that development will not take place. The pattern of encroachment in the past, and the at least theoretical potential for development in the future suggests that direct control of the area through ownership is advisable.

Several approaches to acquisition are recommended. The Town could acquire the land outright, possibly with funding assistance from the Self Help program of the Commonwealth. Alternatively, the Town could receive the land, or a conservation restriction, as a gift. Such a gift would be likely to be offered only if the Town were to offer acceptable conditions for development of the present owner's land on the east side of Route 107. This might be accomplished through allowing development on the east side of Route 107 to occur at a given density in exchange for donation of the marsh property on the west side. An approach to such an arrangement is recommended below.

3. Initiate efforts to place the privately-owned portions of the marsh under conservation restriction.

A conservation restriction would accomplish similar purposes as acquisition. Use of the land would be limited to conservation through deed restriction.

There are several possible ways of obtaining a conservation restriction. One would be similar to receiving a gift of the property, as described above. A second approach would be to place the land under restriction through the Coastal Wetlands Program. This latter approach, of course, would involve a program that is not under the control of the town, and further, may be a somewhat remote possibility.

The Coastal Wetlands Program is a program of the Commonwealth designed to ensure protection of the state's most important wetlands, through which lands in coastal communities is permanently restricted by deed. The process involves public hearings in each community, and contact with individual owners. Compensation is provided in cases where restrictions are found to represent land takings.

4. Rezone the industrially zoned portions of the marsh to Flood Plain.

As noted, the industrial classification of the marsh makes little sense from the standpoint of realism or achievement of the Town's objectives. Further, rezoning the area would make the Reliable Rubbish establishment a non-conforming use. Any expansion or alteration would require a special permit, thus providing the Town with some control over this establishment.

5. Enforce the existing non-zoning Wetlands Protection By-law, under jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission.

As noted previously (Chapter 4, Section 3), the Town has adopted a non-zoning wetlands protection by-law. This potentially valuable tool should be strictly enforced.

The Former Landfill

Issues

The former landfill site includes open areas and property now occupied by the RESCO plant. The main focus of this plan is the open land in the area, specifically the parcels owned by the DeMatteo Construction Company and by the former Dewey Daggett Landfill Disposal site.

Of the land in the East Saugus area, the former landfill is the only area potentially suited for development. Portions of this filled area are buildable if properly cleaned, and are not wetlands. (Clean up procedures mandated by state law and supervised by DEQE have begun on the Daggett site.) The area is located on a major roadway, Route 107, and has good regional access. The DeMatteo site is large, especially in relation to other available sites in the North Shore region, and thus attractive to developers and major users. It contains an undeveloped shoreline, constituting a major portion of the Saugus waterfront.

Thus, the Town's objectives for development, waterfront preservation, and tax base expansion could be achieved in this area. Development could increase the tax base significantly, under several conditions: First, development must be of high value and high quality. Second, the general environment in the area must be improved, both to remedy past problems and to provide a good development climate. Third, the cost of development to the town must be minimal. The Town can set the stage for these conditions by setting zoning standards which permit substantial amounts of development but ensure standards are high, and by requiring that the shoreline be preserved and that impacts on town services be minimal.

One of the Town's major objectives is clean up of the landfill. Development provides this opportunity. The presence of toxic materials on the site, and the state's requirements that these be cleaned, impose economic constraints on development. The Town should recognize that if the area is to be cleaned, it is the private sector which will perform and pay for the work. Subsequent development of the area must be of sufficient scale to make clean up economically feasible.

Policies

The Town's goals give specific direction for development of the former landfill area:

Improve public access to the waterfront.

Recognize the potential of development and/or restoration of the area so as to:

Stabilize critical marsh areas
Identify areas, particularly those adjacent to Route 107,
which might be developed for office and commercial use
Increase the tax base

Recommendations

1. Encourage clean up of the former landfill site by permitting economic development in the area at sufficient scale to make clean up economically feasible.

As noted, state law requires that the area be cleaned before development occurs. The costs of such cleanup must be recoverable, and must be recognized in zoning standards.

2. Establish a new zoning district, Planned Conservation and Development District (Planned C&D District), and place the DeMatteo and Daggett properties in that zone.

The purposes of the new district would be to promote economic development of a high quality consistent with modern industrial development, to conserve the Saugus waterfront, to encourage general cleanup of the area, to increase the Town's tax base, and to provide for public access to and views of the waterfront.

These purposes are quite different from the apparent purposes of the Industrial zoning now in place. Although the bylaw does not state the purposes of the industrial zone explicitly, the wide variety of uses which are permitted, the relatively minimal standards (for example, lot sizes need only be 20,000 square feet, and unbuilt area need only be 30 percent of the lot), and the fact that Industrial districts are located not only in East Saugus, but in various other

parts of the Town, indicate that the district was intended to accommodate small, traditional industrial uses.

3. Establish use and dimensional standards in the Planned Conservation and Development District which recognize market conditions but are consistent with a high level of development and with the Town's ability to provide services.

The following specific dimensional standards are recommended:

Permitted uses: Permitted by right: Professional offices.
Permitted by Special Permit: Hotel; Light Manufacturing*,
Laboratory engaged in experimental or testing research,
provided that there are no adverse impacts upon public health
and safety. Accessory uses: Restaurant, Business Service,
Health Club, Retail Establishment.

Minimum lot size: 40,000 square feet

Minimum open space: 60 percent of lot

Maximum floor area ratio (FAR): .45

Maximum height: 6 stories

Minimum setback: Elevation 7.5 NGVD (the High Predicted
Astronomic Tide Level, approximately 2 and 1/2 feet above
mean high water)

Minimum parking spaces: 1 space per 400 square feet of
building area

*Definition: Fabrication, processing, packaging or assembly
operation employing only electric or other substantially noiseless
and inoffensive motor power, utilizing hand labor or quiet
machinery and processes, and free from agents disturbing to the
neighborhood, such as odors, gas fumes, smoke, cinders, flashing
or excessively bright lights, refuse matter, electromagnetic
radiation, heat or vibration.

These standards are recommended as suitable for the present and near future. Changed conditions may require modifications in zoning standards in the more distant future.

These standards differ considerably from those currently governing the area (those of the I-1 zoning district). Uses permitted in the latter district but not recommended for the Planned C&D district include retail stores, health clubs, places of business for plumbers and contractors, contractors yards, gas stations, garages for auto storage and repair, junk yards--a much greater variety than proposed for the Planned C&D district. Dimensional standards currently in place require lots of only 20,000 square feet; the building area can extend to fully 70 percent of the lot. The proposed standards, which require larger lots and more open space, are more in keeping with modern office and industrial park development.

The most important of these standards are the floor area ratio, the height limit and the setback. The floor area ratio (the ratio of the net floor area of a building to the total area of the lot) is the basic regulator of density of non-residential projects. The recommended level of .45 is not an arbitrary figure but is related to the amount of new development which the capacity of the existing road system can accommodate. Traffic generated by development of the landfill site at an FAR of .45, plus projected traffic from other sources, will result in a level of traffic which Route 107 can handle; development in excess of an FAR of .45 will generate traffic that is above the road's capacity.

The recommended .45 FAR is based upon roadway conditions expected over the next few years. In the event effective roadway capacity is increased (such as by increased use of mass transit), the FAR could be increased through zoning amendment.

No FAR is stated in the current by-law. However, the effective FAR can be calculated from height and parking requirements. For example, an office use of three stories, meeting parking standards, could be developed at an FAR of .78. This FAR is too high for the area: development of this intensity would exceed the capacity of the road system.

The height limit of 6 stories is above that in the present Industrial zone. The greater height limit is recommended because of design factors and the economic potential of the area. Taller buildings could be accommodated well on a parcel as large as this one, if

well-sited. The design guidelines presented below are intended to ensure buildings are of good design quality. Further, taller buildings can afford better views of the water and surrounding open space than the equivalent amount of square footage provided in "squat", more land-intensive developments.

The requirement for the setbacks from water bodies is intended to establish a greenbelt system lining the entire shoreline, consistent with the community's objectives for the area. The by-law should specify that setback areas are not to be used as parking or delivery areas, but are to be landscaped pedestrian spaces.

The elevation of 7.5 NGVD is the level recommended by the Army Corps of Engineers to establish a greenbelt above the high tide line. The elevation is the estimated High Predicted Astronomic Tide Level, as established by the NOAA Boston gauge. Establishment of the location of this line, approximately 2 and 1/2 feet above mean high water, will require a survey of the site.

4. Require developments in the Planned C&D District containing more than 6,000 square feet of floor area to be subject to Site Plan Review.

The site plan review requirement extends provisions already in the Town's zoning by-law to the new district.. Site plan review, Section 12.6 of the existing zoning by-law, requires that developers of projects to which the procedure is applicable submit specified information regarding the impacts of the project to the Planning Board. Traffic impact and environmental impact statements can be required as well upon vote of the Board. In granting site plan approval, the Board must find the project meets a number of standards.

5. Establish design standards to ensure pedestrian access to the waterfront, maintenance of water views, a high level of building design, and provision of usable open space.

The following design guidelines are recommended for incorporation into the Site Plan Review procedure when that procedure is applied to projects in the Planned C&D district:

Development shall be designed to complement and harmonize with the adjacent area with respect to scale, density, bulk, height, landscaping and screening. Building materials of masonry brickwork, wood, and glass are encouraged. Precast concrete panels are generally discouraged.

A detailed landscaping plan shall be submitted as part of the Site Plan Review application. Special emphasis shall be given to designing and implementing a landscape plan along the shore line which includes facilities for pedestrians. Landscaping using indigenous or naturalized plant materials is encouraged.

On each parcel, there shall be at least one pedestrian access to the shoreline provided by a sidewalk connection.

Development of the area as an integrated unit, with maximum benefit from open space, is encouraged. Buildings should be placed such that major entry points are related to one another, so that the spaces between buildings can be used as open space and pedestrian connections.

Structures should be designed so that views of the shoreline from Route 107 are preserved. In satisfying this intent, open space corridors should be provided between all buildings.

6. Work cooperatively with land owners in the Planned C&D District to bring sewerage and water service to the site.

The area is currently not served by the Town's sewerage or water systems. Negotiations should be undertaken to determine the costs of providing service to the area, develop plans, and establish a fair share method of allocating costs. The Town's facility plans, the Water System Analysis, 1986, Bayside Engineering, and the Facility Plan for Water Pollution Control, Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendoff, should be

The sewerage system was designed to have significant treatment capacity to serve additional development. Sewerage capacity is established through Lynn Regional Water Pollution Control District at 5.5 million gallons per day (mgd). Recent development of intensive water uses, namely, restaurants, in the Route 1 area, may have resulted in sewage flows that near capacity levels. This situation should be investigated. Current utilization is but 3.5 mgd.

Service could be extended to the area by installing a line running along Ballard Street, to Greenwood Street, to the Stanley Day Pumping Station. That station, the town's central pumping facility, has sufficient capacity to accommodate the the full 5.5 mgd limit.

Water service could be brought to the area by tapping the MWRA trunk line which runs down Route 107. Payment of a tapping fee would be required.

The Harborfront

The Harborfront, bordering Ballard Street east of its intersection with Eastern Avenue, forms the shoreline along the Saugus River. The area is a working harbor and provides docking, storage, loading and parking facilities for the Town's fishing fleet. Several other businesses are located there as well.

Issues

As scarce waterfront land, the area is unique in the Town of Saugus. Extremely limited in size, its uses must be carefully selected to take maximum advantage of the unique location.

While the area currently serves the fishing industry effectively, some improvements could be made to enhance the area. Land could be used more efficiently; some clean up could improve the environment. Detailed planning for management of harbor services needs to be done. Some of the establishments, particularly on the south side of Ballard Street, are unsightly and could as well operate in other non-harbor locations.

Policies

The community's goals for the area are as follows:

- Promote appropriate economic development activities on Ballard Street, which will

- Encourage and stabilize the commercial fishing industry
- Encourage investment in appropriate development
- Increase the tax base

Improve the visual quality of the area

These goals can be further defined as policies for the area:

Maintain the harbor as the base of operations for the fishing industry.

Limit the harborfront to water-dependent , fishing-related, and complementary uses.

Limit the scale and intensity of development so that land values are stabilized.

Ensure public access to the water, maintenance of view corridors, and attractively designed developments.

The chief threat to the fishing industry is competing development and increased land values. Residential projects, such as luxury waterfront condominiums, would destroy both the industry and the area's character. Thus, in order to protect the industry and the character of the neighborhood, the area should be zoned for restricted and small-scale development.

Recommendations

1. Establish a new zoning district, Waterfront Business District, and place the parcels fronting on both sides of Ballard Street in that zone.

The purposes of the new district would be to preserve the harbor for the use of the fishing industry and other uses directly dependent upon waterfront locations, to preserve the character of the area as a working harbor, and to enhance public access to and views of the water.

These quite limited purposes are very different than those of the zoning districts which are applicable in the area at present. Most of the harborfront is zoned Industrial. As noted, the purpose of this district seems to be to provide locations for relatively small-scale industry of many varied types. These purposes are not consistent with the needs of the area.

2. Establish use and dimensional standards in the Waterfront Business District which preserve the area for water-related uses and permit development at a scale appropriate for this limited area.

The following requirements are recommended.

Permitted uses: Piers, docks, fish and equipment storage, parking, marine equipment and fuel establishments, retail fish store, restaurant, boat repair.

Minimum lot area: 12,000 square feet

Maximum height: 2 stories

Uses such as the auto repair shops and junk yard on the south side of Ballard Street would be made non-conforming by these zoning changes. The Town would thus be able to control expansions and alterations of these establishments through the special permit process.

3. Require developments in the Waterfront Business District containing more than 1,000 square feet of floor area to be subject to Site Plan Review.

The site plan review requirement extends provisions already in the Town's zoning by-law to the proposed Waterfront Business District. Site plan review, Section 12.6 of the existing zoning by-law, requires that developers of projects to which the procedure is applicable submit specified information regarding the impacts of the project to the Planning Board for review and approval. (These procedures are described in the section immediately above, The Former Landfill.)

4. Establish design standards to ensure pedestrian access to the waterfront, maintenance of water views, and a high level of building design.

The following design guidelines are recommended for incorporation into the Site Plan Review procedure when that procedure is applied to projects in the Waterfront Business district:

Development shall be designed to complement and harmonize with the adjacent area with respect to scale, density, bulk, height, landscaping and screening. Building materials of masonry brickwork, wood, and glass are encouraged. Precast concrete panels are generally discouraged.

A detailed landscaping plan shall be submitted as part of the Site Plan Review application. Special emphasis shall be given to designing and implementing a landscape plan along the shore line which includes facilities for pedestrians. Landscaping using indigenous or naturalized plant materials is encouraged.

Developers are encouraged to provide for public access to the shoreline. Access shared by several parcels is acceptable.

Development of the area as an integrated unit, with maximum benefit from open space, is encouraged. Buildings should be placed such that major entry points are related to one another, so that the spaces between buildings can be used as open space and pedestrian connections.

Structures should be designed so that views of the shoreline from Ballard Street are preserved as much as possible.

5. Establish a three-phased harbor management planning process to deal with issues such as mooring and slip limits, facilities management, and harbor rules and regulations. Phase 1 should include establishment of a Harbor Management Commission; Phase 2, preparation of a harbor management plan; and Phase 3, adoption of a harbor management plan.

4. Saugus Center

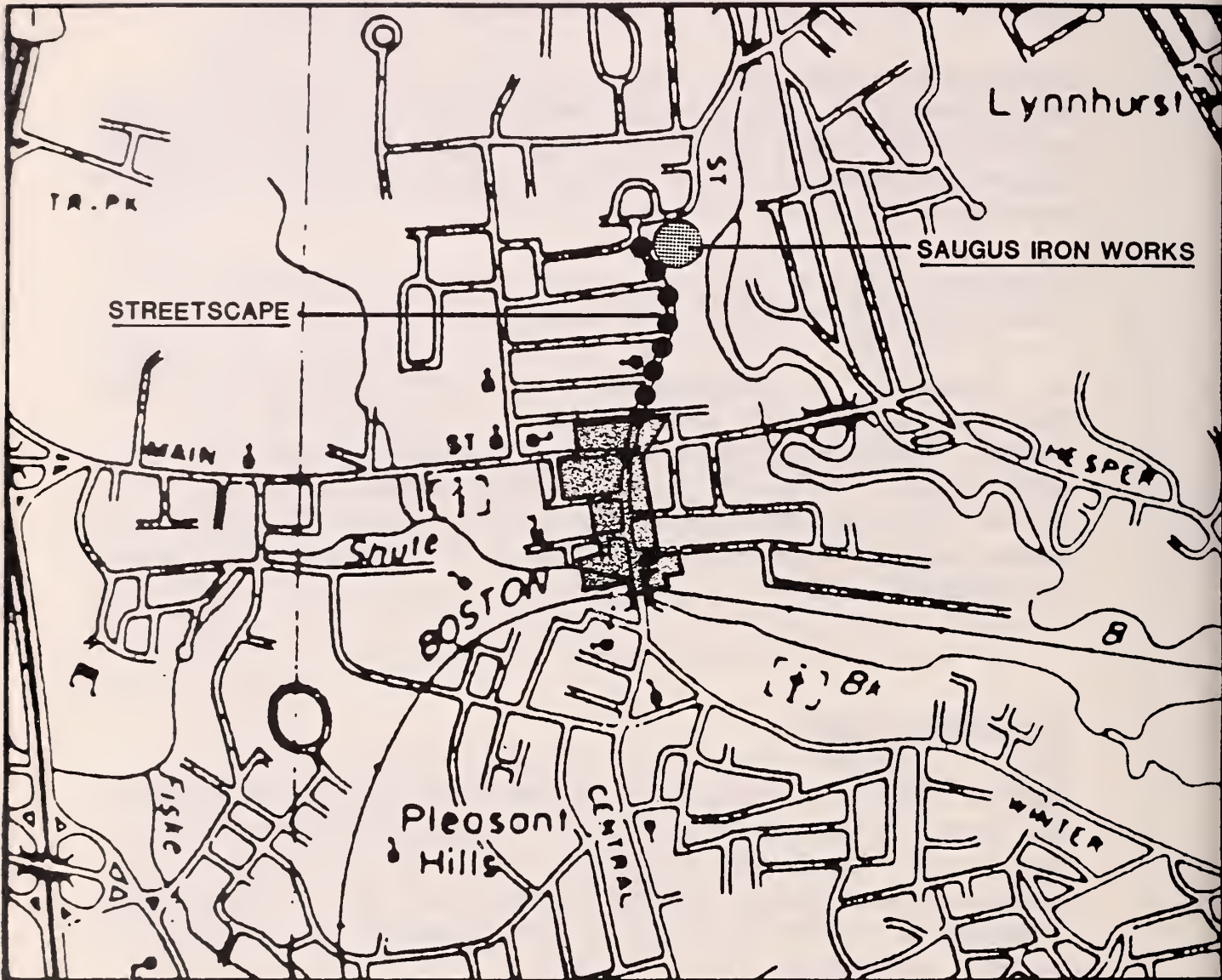
Saugus Center is the civic heart of the Town. The Center contains the Town Hall, the public library, and the Department of Public Works yard. The historic Saugus Iron Works is four blocks to the north on Center Street. Saugus Center's heart is at the intersection of Main and Central Streets, which is organized as a rotary and recently landscaped.

Saugus Center, for the purposes of this study, is defined as the area zoned B-1 Business Neighborhood at the intersection of Main and Central Street running south to the railroad tracks along Central Street; the Town Hall; and the Saugus Iron Works. (See map, Saugus Center.) The surrounding areas are primarily residential.

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Land Use Policy Plan

SAUGUS CENTER



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The older public and private buildings define the primarily civic and historic character of the area. Users of the Center are mainly those transacting business at Town Hall, visiting the library, and shopping for convenience goods. Trips are brief, frequent, and most are made by automobile.

Despite good accessibility (Main Street connects the Center with Route 1; Central Street connects with the north and south parts of Town), the Center appears less successful as a retail center than does Cliftdale. Only a few retail stores exist (drug store, convenience store, liquor store). Recently, several office uses have been established, possibly indicating an evolution of the Center as a joint civic-office area.

The area's chief assets are the Town Hall-related activities, the historic character of the Town Hall and other buildings, and the attractive newly-landscaped rotary. The quality of the area as a civic center could be heightened by establishing additional cultural and municipal activities, and complementary commercial ones. According to the Department of Public Works, no special water or sewerage problems exist, other than the need for overall improvements in these systems.

Issues

Issues to be addressed in planning for Saugus Center include traffic and parking, economic viability, and urban design.

The Center's major streets, Main and Central, carry relatively heavy volumes of traffic. Traffic has been increasing, and as noted previously, exceeds capacity on both streets.

Parking conditions are similar to those in Cliftdale: parking space availability is tight, long-term parkers occupy spaces more appropriate for short-term stays, and dense development limits opportunities to develop additional spaces.

The economic viability of the privately-owned properties in the Center will be key to the area's future health and successful preservation. As noted, Cliftdale appears to have a competitive edge over the Center in retailing activity. Natural market trends toward office development as a complement to civic activities may

be contribute to the area's future success. As with Clifftondale, multifamily housing in combination with ground floor stores and offices, could provide additional economic vitality. Economic development, however, must be contained within the Center, and not be allowed to encroach upon residential neighborhoods.

The site of existing Department of Public Works yard, located but several hundred yards from Town Hall, is a potentially valuable property. Its use as storage for vehicles and equipment is incompatible with the nearby historic and civic uses. Relocation of the yard could permit development--private and/or public--of uses more complementary to those in the area. The Town landfill, located on Main Street in the western part of Town, might be a suitable location for the yard.

Finally, urban design deficiencies, such as signage, inadequate landscaping, and the visual separation of the Iron Works from the Center proper should be addressed.

Policies

Preserve Saugus Center as the historic and civic core of the Town. Policy efforts should focus on traffic and parking improvements, enhanced economic activity to stabilize the area, and improved urban design.

Recommendations

- 1. Implement a comprehensive traffic circulation planning program, recommended in the previous chapter.**
- 2. Amend the zoning by-law to allow multifamily residential use on upper floors of commercial buildings in B-1 districts.**

As noted in the previous section, multifamily use in a neighborhood center can help revitalize and stabilize an area, and can provide housing opportunities.

- 3. Maintain the existing B-1 zoning district boundaries (with the modification recommended above), in order to prevent business encroachment in adjacent residential areas.**

4. **Encourage cultural and civic activities in the Center by making Town Hall available for community groups, theatre, and music groups.** These types of functions would enrich the Center, and eventually could lead to spin off uses such as restaurants.

5. **Develop an urban design plan, and accompanying urban design guidelines for improvement of building facades and signage.** The urban design plan should include proposals to improve the quality of parking lots, to improve the streetscape, and to link the Iron Works with Saugus Center proper.

6. **Explore the feasibility of relocating the Department of Public Works yard to the site of the town landfill.** This proposal, a relatively long-range one, would require satisfaction of environmental regulations as a first condition.

7. **Implement the recommendations contained in the previous chapter regarding improvements in the sewerage, water and drainage systems (Chapter 4, Section 4).** In particular, the recommendations of the master plans, Facility Plan for Water Pollution Control, and Water Systems Analysis, should be implemented; a drainage plan should be developed; new developments should contribute to infrastructure improvements, and a capital budgeting process should be established.

5. The Route 99 Area

The Route 99 Area is a mixed use neighborhood located along Route 99 to the Melrose city line. For the purposes of this study, the area is located south of the Route 1- Frank P. Bennett Highway intersection, and includes those areas along Route 99 zoned B-2, Highrise Business and Industrial, and abutting parcels zoned R-2, Residential B. (See map, Route 99 Area.)

The major uses in the area are the Trimount Bituminous Company, a large quarry, and the Palace Entertainment Complex, a nightclub. Other uses include a variety of small scale motels, bars, garages, mobile homes and approximately 30 homes. A four-story office

SAUGUS

Land Use Policy Plan

ROUTE 99 AREA



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building has recently been built in the area. Topographic conditions made this construction costly. Uses are generally conforming with zoning, except for some residences in the B-2 district.

Route 1 access to parcels fronting on Route 99 is good. Traffic is not heavy, although the numerous curb cuts and poorly organized driveways, if maintained in their current condition, could be the source of future congestion. The area is served by the public sewerage system. According to the Town Department of Public Works, there are no special problems related to the sewerage system, other than the needs for overall improvements in the system. According to the 1986 Water Systems Analysis cited above, improvements in the water distribution system serving the area are required. Specifically, installation of a 12-inch transmission line along Route 99 is recommended for Phase I.

Issues

The Route 99 area, although a strip only about one-half mile long, has potential for redevelopment and revitalization. This potential, due to its good access to and from Route 1 and the opportunity for assembly of parcels currently in lower grade use, is demonstrated by the investment recently made in the area in the construction of the four-story office building noted above.

The most significant issue regarding the Route 99 area is the direction which future development should take. Current zoning of most of the area, B-2, allows a wide variety of uses, including retail and office. Thus, mixed uses have developed; the area has neither a retail or office character, in contrast to the distinctive retail nature of the Route 1 Corridor. Existing zoning policy gives no specific direction regarding the character of future development.

Since the Town already has extensive retail development, as noted previously, and has not shared significantly in the development of office-based service and research industries to the extent that the Boston Metropolitan area has, redevelopment of the Route 99 area for primarily office use appears appropriate. The Route 99 area does not have the strong retail identity of Route 1, and thus may be in a favorable position to capture new metropolitan area office development in the future. Further, while most of Saugus suffers from serious traffic problems for which solutions are difficult, development of the Route 99 area would increase traffic on Route 1,

but not elsewhere in the Town. As noted, improvements in Route 1 are expected.

In order for new development to occur, the recommendations in the previous chapter regarding the water and sewerage systems must be implemented.

Policies

Encourage economic development of the Route 99 area oriented toward offices and office-based research industries.

Recommendations

- 1. Establish a new zoning district, Highway Corridor-Office, and place the Route 99 area in that zone.**

The purposes of the district will be the same as those of the Highway Corridor zone proposed above for the Route 1 Corridor, namely, to encourage redevelopment of high quality, to increase the tax base, to improve visual quality, and to ameliorate safety problems. The difference will be that retail will not be a permitted principal use in the Highway Corridor-Office zone.

Rezoning of parcels now zoned R-B, Single Residential, which abutting the current B-2 districts, is recommended, to establish the opportunity to create parcels of developable depth.

- 2. Establish use and dimensional requirements in the Highway Corridor-Office district which allow for reasonable levels of building and ensure development is of high quality.**

The standards will be those recommended above for the Highway Corridor district with the exception of permitted uses. Permitted uses will be as follows:

Permitted uses: Office, restaurant other than fast food restaurant, accessory uses including health club, light manufacturing, and retail.

The recommendations for larger minimum lot sizes than currently required, landscaping, and setbacks from residential areas, are

designed to ensure that future development occurs at a relatively large scale with minimal traffic congestion, provides an environment essential for modern office park use, and does not adversely affect residential neighborhoods.

3. Implement the recommendations contained in the previous chapter regarding improvements in the sewerage, water and drainage systems (Chapter 4, Section 4). In particular, the recommendations of the master plans, Facility Plan for Water Pollution Control, and Water Systems Analysis, should be implemented; a drainage plan should be developed; new developments should contribute to infrastructure improvements, and a capital budgeting process should be established.



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End Note

Calculation of Maximum Potential Development under Existing Zoning in the Route 1 Corridor

Total land area in Corridor: 206 acres, or 8,973,360 square feet

Total existing development: 1,147,610 square feet

Existing floor/area ratio (FAR): 0.13

Permitted FAR under current zoning, assuming surface parking:

1-story building: 0.50

2-story building: 0.67

3-story building: 0.75

7-story building: 0.87

Additional development permitted is difference between permitted FAR under current zoning, and existing FAR.

Amount of additional development permitted:

1-story building: 3,300,000 square feet

2-story building: 4,860,000 square feet

3-story building: 5,580,000 square feet

7-story building: 6,660,000 square feet

For Reference

Not to be taken

from this library

